

## **Proposal for Lighting the A-B Regional Varsity Baseball Field, Adjacent Tennis Courts and Practice Field**

On behalf of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School System, youth baseball, community tennis players, youth soccer and youth football would like to provide additional playing time and improve safety for the town's people by lighting facilities on land owned by the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools. The Regional School District is amenable to entering into an inter-municipal agreement, similar to that which governs the use of Leary Field. This project brings clear public benefit and can in no way be construed as routine maintenance.

Currently, Acton-Boxborough Youth Baseball (ABYB) players, in addition to the three high school teams and one Jr. High team, play baseball in the spring, summer and fall seasons, mostly on the high school baseball fields and Jones Field. Also, a large number of citizens use the five tennis courts at the high school from April through October. There are also two adult baseball teams in Acton that will benefit from this project, in addition to A-B Youth Soccer and Pop Warner football. The public's use of these facilities is limited only by weather and availability of daylight.

This proposal is to purchase and install a total of eight (8) galvanized poles with light fixtures, which will illuminate primarily the varsity baseball field, adjacent tennis courts and practice football field at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School. In fact, ABYB Babe Ruth baseball players will garner most of the benefit from this project in that their practice and play times are limited severely in the spring and fall due to demands of school teams and abbreviated natural light. The three A-B High School baseball teams and Jr HS team use this field and the "Jr HS field" daily from 3pm to 6pm starting in early April through early June. School teams' practices and games generally finish at 6pm, leaving little time for ABYB players and coaches to use that space during the week. Hence, spring season games are usually limited to four (4) innings, and practices are essentially non-existent.

This project will effectively create additional recreation space in that usage will increase by up to 100% in the spring and fall as currently play must stop at approximately 6PM (having begun weekdays at 3PM), but with lights, can be extended to 9PM. During the summer, the use of these resources will be extended by approximately 2 hours per day (from 8PM to 10PM) and will now be able to accommodate those who work late and are unable to attend their children's baseball games or play tennis, during the early evening hours.

Also, two other community youth groups will benefit from this project: Pop Warner Football and A-B Youth Soccer. Both organizations are growing, and having access to lit playing space will extend their abilities to support more youth in their programs. Additional lighting fixtures attached to the outfield poles will readily illuminate the adjacent practice field for added usage, primarily in the spring and fall.

In addition to creating more time for playability for baseball and tennis players, the safety of tennis players will improve due to netting which will be hung to prevent most foul balls from landing onto courts 1 and 2, potentially injuring tennis players. Also, an improved play surface will be added to the baseball field that will improve water retention, mitigate loss of infield mix blown away as dust, and decrease ongoing maintenance costs for ABYB.

Per the Town of Acton Open Space Recreation Plan (OSRP), this project will: 1) preserve the remaining rural character of Acton and 2) improve recreational opportunities for its citizens. This is an ideal location for lit play areas as, unlike Jones or the imminent fields at School Street, there are virtually no citizens who will be affected negatively by lighting at this isolated spot. Glare and light pollution into the atmosphere will be mitigated by the technology used in these “green” fixtures.

The Regional School District has considerable experience bidding and managing construction projects, thereby assuring quality work will be completed in a timely fashion. The Region has also agreed to absorb ongoing utility costs to the benefit of the community’s tennis, baseball, football and soccer players and their parents.

In summary, lighting the varsity baseball field, adjacent tennis courts and practice football field at Acton-Boxborough Regional High School will increase the recreational opportunities and improve safety for the citizens of Acton.